1:Griffiths M-5. (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

361 boundaries. Such boundaries exist in theory, but are not always marked out. The religious ceremonies which are supposed to take [196] them into account just go round the outskirts of the village, paying no particular attention to supposed boundary points.

363 The ordinary Kol village is not a pretentious affair. There will be one or two central paths, three to ten feet wide and up to 300 yards long, which are the main streets and which the houses face. If the terrain permits, these paths usually run in a northerly-southerly [364] direction and are often winding. Between the houses there are little lanes through which one may squeeze to get to the back of the village [342] where the trash is thrown. The houses are made of *chatai* walls plastered with mud, or possibly of thick mud walls. The roof is usually of grass, but cheap country tiles are frequently employed. A two-storied house is unknown except in the larger towns where brick is used and some wealthy person resides. There is no street in the ordinary sense of the word and the lanes which provide the outlets for the 361 various houses are narrow, dirty and tortuous. The individual group may have two small buildings, one of which houses the cattle, though [343 it is not unusual to find the cattle kept on the veranda. It is from 231] such a village that the labourers go out to their fields which not in- [241] frequently lie from two to three miles distant from the village. On the edge of most villages are seen a few meaner huts grouped together 621 and in these one usually finds the depressed and the untouchables. 564 The fact is at once known by the pigs which are all about such houses. 735 Where Kols do not have their own village and are attached to some larger village or hamlet the two groups usually live on the edge; but the Kol, generally speaking, is more cleanly than the lower groups whose houses occasionally adjoin his dwelling place. When questioned why they live apart the answer has usually taken a three-fold form: [262] It is claimed first that Hindus do not like to have Kols living near them because they (the Kols) eat meat and especially pork, which is consumed at the time of sacrifice. The next reason is an economic one: Kols are too poor to rent lands or pay the house rent required in the [427] villages. One rupee a year is the maximum paid outside the village and sometimes nothing is required save a bit of help to the *malgusar* or landlord when he needs labourers in his fields. Kols also claim that if they live in close proximity to the higher castes they would not be free to sing and play the drum the whole night through, a thing which they consider necessary at certain times of worship.

184 342 351 LIVING CONDITIONS. There is a good deal of variation in the conditions under which the Kols live. In places where tenancy is

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yellow *haldi* water and keeps it in a number of *lotas*. As the guests are about to depart the women appear with the *haldi* water and *kajra* (lamp-black), the latter being in the form of a paste. The yellow water is sprinkled over the departing guests and the lamp-black is applied just below the eyes. This is considered auspicious and both are believed to have a protective significance. In jest the *kajra* is sometimes applied to other parts of the face and hearty laughs and ridicule result, all of which the party must bear cheerfully. The girl's mother should sprinkle the *haldi* water on the boy's father and after she has done this and put the colour below his eyes she holds her brass *lota* before him and he is expected to drop some money into it—at least one rupee. The rest of the men are then sprinkled by the other women and are also asked to give a gift, but not as much as the father gave. The women then courteously salute and go off taking with them the *lotas* containing the coins.

For a brief time the men of the two parties remain seated together, eat *pan supari* and pass around the *hukka* for a smoke. Finally the boy's party gets up and all go to the edge of the village together where they embrace and separate. This ends the first part of the wedding cycle.

(2) *Domestic Preparations.* The time that is to elapse between the writing of the *lagan* and the *sadi* is fixed by the *lagan* itself and depends on several factors of an astrological nature. Usually there is less than a month between them. During this period there are active preparations in both houses as certain important things must be accomplished.

In the girl's village some uncooked rice coloured with *haldi* is taken around by members of the family and given to those who are to be invited to the ceremonies. With the rice the time and place of the ceremonies are made known. There should be plenty of supplies of food on hand and among the things listed there should be *sendur*, a *dauri* (small basket), new clothes, cash for small gifts and payments, rice, pulse, especially *urad* pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) and wheat.

(a) *Mangarmati.* The *mangarmati* or *magarmati* is a ceremony whereby a certain amount of earth is obtained from which *chulhas*, or earthen fireplaces, are to be constructed. This ceremony, which is performed at both homes and on the same night, is essentially alike in both the houses and must be performed after sunset. Only the women take part in the gathering of the sacred earth, but we were allowed to watch a *mangarmati* ceremony in the Kaimur hills. It was found that a portion of the courtyard just in front of the house had

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584 been plastered and marked somewhat according to the accompanying
796 diagram. About eight o'clock in the evening, as we waited nearby
354 with a group of men, the beat of the drum was heard and we went up to the thornfenced enclosure. Only women were allowed within the

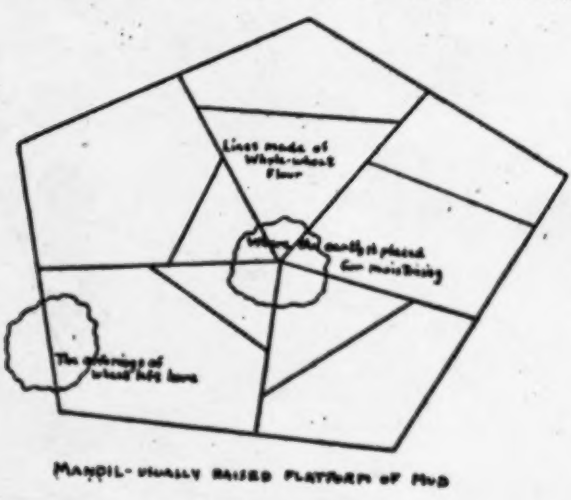
MAGHARMĀTĪ - GATHERING EARTH FOR CHILDREN TO PREPARE LĀWĀ.
Lines made of Whole-wheat Flour
MANDIL - USUALLY RAISED PLATFORM OF MUD

Fig. 19

courtyard, and the men had to remain outside, but a good view was had of the proceedings. The drum was played by a Chamar male, hired for this occasion, who was the only man taking any part in the ceremony. The women and children formed a procession within the
[482] courtyard. There were a number of baskets (there should be seven) carried on the heads of unmarried girls, while others carried a pick (*gainti*) and a mattock (*kodali*). The leader and the first in line of the procession should either be the sister of the bride or her *phuphi*, her father's sister. On her head was an earthen jar like a brass *lota* (some-
[482] times the latter may be used) which was filled with water and into which were inserted mango twigs with the leaves attached. On the top of this rested an earthen lamp, *dip*. Figure 20 shows how this was carried. With this light on her head she led the way to the place
[523 539] where the earth was dug up and they sang as they proceeded. Some of the songs which were sung at Deosori in the Kaimurs are as follows:

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THE LEADER OF THE MANGARMĀṬĪ PROCESSION

Fig. 20

1. *Lanka gaye Hanuman,*
   Rama Lakshman ghar aye.
   To Lanka far went Hanuman,
   Then Ram and Lakshman came home.

2. *Mati khodain gai,*
   Bichhi marisa haya daiya haya ;
   Mati khodain gai, bisa le bahu.
   Ho daiya ho, Ho daiya ho, Ho daiya ho.

   The clay was dug,
   I was bitten by a scorpion—
   Alas, Alas !

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The clay was dug,
It poisoned me much—
Alas, Alas, Alas!

3. *Pate par bi jhiliya,*
Jhilmiliya pan.
Char Char bandra,
Ghi, roti, dei.

She stands on a rock by the lake
Her lips are shining with *pan.*
(And she says) "Come along monkey
I shall give you buttered bread."

4. *Sari dekh ke gaya sasurar,*
Aur sarhaj dekh ke lubhaya

Sari dekh ke gaya sasuriya
Dhan dekh ke lubhaya.

He went to his father-in-law's abode,
Drawn by the beauty of the bride's own sister.
But there he fell in love with the wife of the bride's brother.

Again he journeyed to his father-in-law's abode
Tempted by the beauty of the bride's own sister.
But this time he fell for the wealth of his father-in-law.

All but the first song are really directed at the bride to be, and there are certain implications not always easy to understand. In the second one the idea comes out that the girl even at the *mangarmati* time is liable to be smitten by love enroute to her digging. The third refers to the plight of a young girl caught alone, perhaps, with a tempting mouth, and a vague promise for the future. In the last song the bride is taunted with a song which implies that her lover has not really come because of her. In fact, she has no attraction for him, for it is her married sister, or her sister-in-law or the father-in-law's wealth that really draws him.

584 796 354 As these songs were sung the party moved slowly forward to the spot where they were to dig; in this case it happened to be not more than seventy-five feet from the house. Upon reaching the spot they formed

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a circle and all the time sang and beat time with their hands, the Chamar accompanying them with his drum. Several of the women took part in the digging of the earth and each girl was allowed but one blow with the pick. The earth thus displaced was gathered up with the mattock and put into the baskets. It was estimated that about thirty pounds were actually brought. The group then returned to the courtyard as slowly as they went but in the reverse order, with the lamp at the rear. The earth was then thrown in the centre of a small raised platform called the *mandil*, though occasionally the *mandil* is made later on from the earth brought in at this time. After the baskets were emptied the women brought water in small earthenware vessels and each threw water on the pile of earth until it was thoroughly soaked. The women then went to another part of the courtyard where each had left a bit of wheat which they brought from their homes when they first came. This was piled at another point and as each presented her wheat the mother dipped a bit of sweet oil from her household oil-jug and gave it to the other women. After this a small cone of cowdung, which is worshipped by unmarried girls, was set up on the *mandil*. See Figure 19.

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This earth should be sufficient to make either five or seven *chulhas* and they should be prepared sometime during that night. In Deosori they said that it would be done in the morning, and as it is done only by the women of the household it is likely that it was done after the people had departed. The party broke up at this point and from twenty to twenty-five women and young girls departed. This happened at 9 P.M. Occasionally there is a feast following the *mangarmati*, but there was none in this particular case.

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The next day the *chulhas* constructed from this earth should be ready for the preparation of the *lawa*, a mixture of parched paddy and millet, which is considered an indispensable part of the wedding preparations. During the time of its preparation there is joking and fooling. Before they can start to parch the rice one of the male members brings a young chicken and thrusts it into the lighted *chulha*. If the chicken does not catch fire and die (that is, if the *chulha* is not hot enough) it becomes the property of the male relative, but if it dies the women take it and make it into a curry. If the chicken catches fire no effort is made to save it. The parching of rice may now begin and this should be initiated by the man who brought the chicken. The same *chulha* which was used for the burning of the chicken should not be used for the subsequent parching. As the man commences his work some of his female relatives approach him and do all they can to disturb his work and irritate him. They may throw mud at him, abuse

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Worship at a Shrine. An account may here be given of the worship of the smallpox goddess as witnessed at a village shrine. The first hint of the matter was the beat of drums as a group approached the shrine. The instrument was a kettle-drum, hung about the neck of the drummer. Following the drummer came a young man with a brass tray filled with small *puris* and cocoanuts, carried on his shoulder. Beside him was a younger boy who was carrying two red flags, one of them rather large and on a long pole, and the other proportionately shorter. Both flags tapered to a point. Next came a woman apparently much perturbed, with dishevelled hair. Her head was partially covered by her *sari*. Close behind was her husband who seemed to be a rather elderly man, and with him was a small boy who appeared to be ill. It was not realized at first that this boy was the victim of smallpox. When they reached the shrine the drummer took his stand to one side and continued to beat his drum, while a woman came up and poured water over the shrine and the representations of Khermai and Asmani *devi*. As the drummer played, the woman with the dishevelled hair, who happened to be the mother of the lad, began to stretch herself repeatedly at full length before the shrine, and then, as it were, measured her length around and around the platform on which the shrine was situated. As she did this, she held a cocoanut in her right hand. She was then followed by her husband who rolled in the dust before the shrine until instructed by the *panda* to measure his length around the shrine as his wife was doing. Just before he came to the shrine his body had been anointed with *haldi* and oil, and this gathered much dust and dirt. The larger boy with the tray also went about the shrine as did the boy who had carried the flags. They did not, however, measure their lengths. An uncle from some other village joined them and each went around seven times in a clockwise direction. Except for the drumming, the measuring of their lengths about the shrine was done in silence. Only the adults actually measured their lengths.

When the proper number rounds had been completed, the group stopped at the steps of the platform in front of Kher *devi's* shrine. The tray of cocoanuts and *puris* was placed on the platform and the people ascended the steps and sat on the platform. The drummer seated himself and continued the beating of the drum, and the mother of the sick boy began to perform acts in which she appeared to be imploring the deity. She prostrated her head to the ground, then sat up and wildly swung her body, first from the upright position with a sweeping motion, to a position of prostrate petition. Except for the gentle drumming all this too was done in silence. She then poured water over the shrine and wiped it carefully with a rag. Asmani

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

778 was washed as well. The *puris* were then put right beside the shrine
796 in piles and the cocoanuts in front. The two flags carried by the
755 boy were set up along with others which had accumulated at the shrine, the larger by Khermai and the smaller one by Asmanimai. Two or three of the cocoanuts were then broken and laid before the *devis*.

Another procession now started, this time around the shrine of Khermai only. It too went in a clockwise direction, not around the platform as a whole, but on the platform and around the *devi*. This time three rounds were made. The woman with the dishevelled hair and her husband both measured their lengths in this procession, but the others did not do so, they simply walked around. The group then gathered again in front of Khermai and the woman once more prostrated herself, although not as vigorously as before. In the meantime the drummer came down and sat beside a small hedge near the shrine. His wife spread out a piece of cloth in front of him, and the villagers proceeded to pour out their offerings of rice, wheat, *dal* and the like onto the cloth. It was said that this went to the drummer. At the same time individual members of the group on the platform were breaking the remaining cocoanuts into small pieces. These were distributed to everyone within sight. The *puris* were not distributed; that would be done later on.

The accompanying diagram shows the arrangement of this shrine and gives an idea of what was done. See figure 27 and plate XXV.

778 *Offerings at the Shrines.* Considerable mention has been made
782 of the offerings presented at Kol shrines, but more should be added and the matter summarized.

The general tendency is toward offerings of cocoanuts and food rather than animals. This is partly due to economic reasons, but may also be due to the influence of the Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism.

The most common single offering is the *hom*, which is essentially a fire sacrifice. This must have been borrowed from the Hindus. Into the fire burning before the deity is dropped *ghi* and incense. Sometimes pieces of cocoanut, or seeds and drops of lime juice are added.

The cocoanut is universally offered, and it has been suggested
[824] that it is symbolic of human sacrifice and that the shell represents the human skull. As a rule Kols seem to have no knowledge of this point
[773] of view. At the temple of Shardamai and Maihar, the Brahmin priest told us the cocoanuts were symbolical of the head of a certain Alhandal who used to bathe Shardamai daily with water and finally sacrificed his own head to her. She was so pleased at this that she gave him the gift of immortality. According to Crooke, Alha and Udal were

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two Banaphar Rajput heroes engaged in a war between two Rajput clans. This was dated about 1165-1203 A.D.[1]

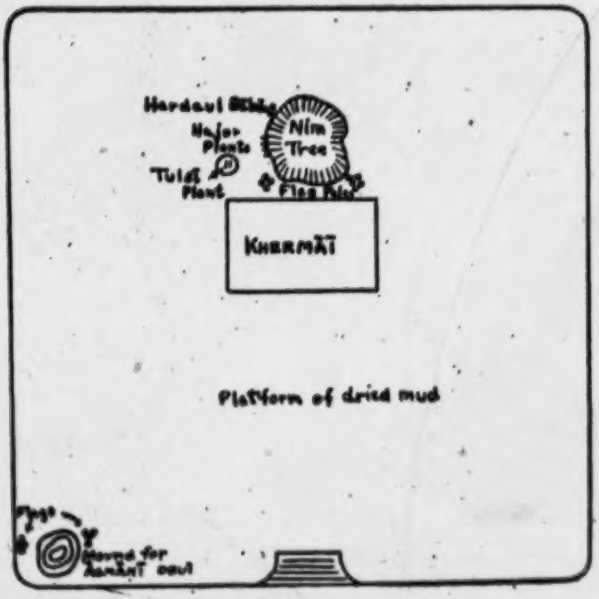

Fig. 27

Usually the cocoanut is first laid whole before the deity, and after the ceremonies have been performed and any invocations offered by the *panda*, the cocoanut is broken by hitting it on the ground or on a stone. It is always struck on the stone; not broken by being hit by a stone or other instrument. The shell is thrown aside and the edible portion placed before the deity. Pieces are distributed to each of the worshippers and onlookers, who then eat before her. A priest may break a cocoanut in the absence of the offerer, if the latter is not able to be present.

Lemons or limes are also offered. These please and attract the *devis*. They are also liked by demons and may attract them. Should

1 *Ibid.*, p. 388.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS OF THE KOLS. The chief religious festivals that Kols have interest in are the following: 796

Amavasya—"No moon day." Monthly.
Dasara—on the tenth (*dasa*) day of the month Kunwar.
Dewali—lamp festival, first day of Kartik, twenty days after Dasara.
Hareli—"greenery", during the monsoon time: Srawan.
Hariyari—a form of Hareli.
Holi—the spring equinoctial festival in the month of Phag at full moon.
Jawara—twice a year: just before Holi and again before Dasara.
Khajleniya—a portion of the Jawara festival and sometimes a synonym for it.
Khicheri—named but not clearly differentiated.
Marpah—in memory of the dead.
Nagpanchami—the snake festival in Srawan.
Naodurgan—a part of the Jawara festival.
Phag—the same as Holi.
Pusan—a festival known in Rewa.
Rakhi—"protector", the ceremony of amulet tying. In Sawan.
Ramnavami—Ram's birthday, 9th day of Chaita.
Sirwani—another name for the Rakhi festival.
Tija—another name for Khajleniya.

These festivals however, are not all of equal value, but as far as possible we have given a description of them and of how the Kols enter into the same. Hindu influences are apparent. [77]

Amavasya. This is a monthly festival and is observed on the day when the moon is "new" that is, on the dark of the moon. It is only observed however, by the more Hinduised Kols. As the new moon comes forth in its purity, all should be made ready to receive her. The women busy themselves in cleaning and plastering their houses, mending the holes or broken plaster, and making everything spick and span. The men may go to the Nerbudda to bathe. Among Hindus much attention is paid to Amavasya, and should it fall on Monday "it is sacred, people fast, bathe, make gifts to Brahmins, and worship the holy Fig tree."[1] In this connection the Kols will pluck off bits of their garments and throw them toward the moon, as described on previous pages.[2] The festival is apparently a Vedic one and needless 796 177 [821]

1 Crooke, W., *Religion & Folklore of Northern India*, p. 35.
2 See pp. 131, 136.

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796 177 to say, Kols living away from strong Hindu influences do not pay particular attention to this, although it is known and mentioned.

Dasara is a very important Hindu festival and is celebrated on the tenth day of the Hindu month *Kunwar*—portions of September and October. In this case again, the Kols enter into it quite freely, yet it is not one of their important festivals. The Hindu legends connected with this day seem to indicate that it is a day to celebrate a victory and hold military displays.

[788] Any observation among the Kols usually takes the form of a procession of men to the village boundary, carrying with them lights and torches, the procession being marked by the beating of drums and the singing of the men. From there they return home rejoicing as if from a victory, and are greeted by the women who have a feast ready.

It is also a semi-agricultural festival with some, as the wheat should not be sown till after *Dasara*. Ten days before *Dasara* wheat is sown in the houses. This is discussed in connection with the *Jawara* festiyal,[1] which seems to be the most important to the Kol and overlaps both *Dasara* and *Holi*.

[821] *Devali*. This is the feast of lights and comes twenty days after *Dasara*, and is held on the new moon day (*Amavasya*) of the Hindu month *Kartik* (October-November). This too is predominantly a Hindu festival, and the Kols observance is largely by imitation. Hindus set out lights, and the illuminations, particularly in cities [775] where it is well observed, are very beautiful. The Hindu believes that on this night the souls of the good dead return to visit their old haunts. So the houses are made ready—all is clean; old earthen lamps are thrown away and new ones replace them. The new ones should burn all night, and the family will stay up to receive the spirits of their deceased, not yet reborn.

Kols usually go no further than first burning a *diya* inside the house in front of the inner place of worship, invoking, they say, Shardamai, though the names of all the gods and goddesses known to them should be uttered before the shrine, as well as the names of their own sainted dead. Then the lamp is taken up and together with a few others is set on the doorstep to guide the spirit. If the Kol has any wealth, he may worship that too; but there is usually so little that they do not take it into account.

Haveli. The word literally means "greenery", and it appears that only the Hinduized Kols have much knowledge of it. Among

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orthodox Hindus each passage of the sun from one constellation to another is marked by some kind of ceremony. The change after the sun has reached its most northern course coincides with the coming of the welcome monsoon rains, which turn the dry and dusty lands into a paradise of green. Russell and Hiralal also note that the Kurmis, an agricultural caste in the Central Provinces, keep this festival in the month of *Srawan* (July-August).[1]

Hariyari. This has been named to us by Kols and is probably very similar to, if not identical with, the *Hareli* festival. Crooke has a few words by way of information: "Bhuiyas, Kols, and Binds of the United Provinces also worship during the rainy season Haryari Devi, 'Mother of Greenery', by employing their Baiga priest to sacrifice chickens and to pour a libation of wine on the field after harvest or before the sowing season."[2]

Holi. This festival is usually called *Phag* by Kols as it occurs in the month of *Phagun* (February-March). It is essentially a spring festival, largely entered into and carried on by the lower castes. It marks the coming of spring, and the sympathetic magic in the ceremony tends to promote the fertility of crops and animals.

Kols who live in or near cities and towns observe this more than those isolated in villages. In Rewa a group of Kols claimed that they would not particularly observe it, but Kols near Jubbulpore said that those who remained behind in Rewa observed it much more fully than they who had left and come away.

Preparations for the *Phag* festival were watched in a Kol village close to Jubbulpore, and our enquiries were freely answered. The first part of the festival centres around a great bonfire which is arranged much as Hindu castes construct it. This should always be built outside the village and eastwards, towards the rising sun. If one Kol village cannot get up enough enthusiasm for a good celebration, they may join with another village in their preparations, or several villages may join together. The wood for the fire may be taken by force or stolen from its owners, and the owners are not supposed to make any protest.

The place chosen for the fire is first cleared and levelled. In the centre a hole is dug, into which the pole, around which the wood is to be stacked, will be inserted. Two pice, some *haldi* and a *supari* nut are dropped into the hole. The central pole should be of *andi* wood, the castor oil stalk (*Palma christi*), and around this the wood, brush and other inflammable materials are laid. The larger the pile the more

1 Russell and Hiralal, *Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV. p. 84.
2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 265.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

796 successful the ceremony. Last of all the whole is covered with a layer of dry grass.

[177 793] The time for the actual lighting is learned from the Hindu *pandit* who knows horoscopy and can tell it exactly. Theoretically the pile should be lighted at full moon, when the sun and the moon are exactly [821] in opposition. This may occur before sunset, and if so, the pile should be lighted as soon as dusk has fallen. It was to be lighted in the case we investigated at 3 a.m. When the hour has come, all who take [522] part in the festivities gather round the sacred pile with much laughing and vulgar jesting. A cocoanut is usually broken just as the fire is touched off. The fire is lit from burning cow dung cakes; and before [237 touched off, it is carried by the *panda* seven times around the pile 372] which is always kept to his right, so that he goes clockwise about it. The glowing cow dung cakes are then inserted into the wood and grass drawn over it, and the fire begins. One should never blow upon this fire to get it started. It should be fanned, but never blown from the mouth. Now the whole group will circumambulate the fire in a clockwise direction, throwing wheat or other gifts into it. Later on, as the fire dies down, some daring youths may jump over it or run through it. As the group goes about the fire, they shout: "*Hori ha, Hori mata*, take thou this wheat our *Hori mata*." *Hori* is used for *Holi*. Singing is kept up all night, and more wood may be thrown upon the fire.

[583]

796 With the lighting of the fire, the obscenity of this festival is loosened, and may be resorted to all night and the next day. Obscene 786 songs of the *Kabiri* type in which the sexual act is described with 831 appropriate gestures are sung. These are not directed against any particular individual, and no offense should be taken by anyone. A woman may snatch away a bit of the clothes of a man known to her, such as his cap or *pagri* or cloth flung over his shoulder. He must give her a present before he can recover it, and the hat should be filled with *gur* (raw sugar) and sweets before he can get it back. Sexual license is permitted at this time.

[787] Certain prophecies about the coming harvest are made by observing the way the fire burns, the smoke rises, and how it is carried away by the wind.

On the day following liberties of all kinds are taken with people. Dust, mud, dirt, and water coloured red, are thrown over passers-by. Sugar garlands are exchanged and indecent remarks passed. *Kabiri* [533] songs and others celebrating Krishna's love affairs are sung. The more shameless a lowcaste man can be, the more lustily he is cheered by his companions. There is no redress for those insulted on this

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occasion, as such acts are not considered really reprehensible if done during *Holi*.

Jawara. This is the most important of the festivals observed by the Kols and while linked to Hindu observances, is nevertheless probably a much more primitive affair than many Hindu ceremonies. The *Jawara* festival comes twice a year, in the Spring in the Hindu month of *Chaita* (March-April), and the Fall in the month of *Kunwar* (September-October). The former begins on the first day of the Hindu year in the month *Chaita*, and lasts for nine days ending on *Ramnavami* or the birthday of Rama. In the Fall it comes during the first nine days of *Kunwar* and ends just before *Dasara* on the tenth of *Kunwar*. The Fall festival comes just before the sowing of the winter crop of wheat, and the Spring festival comes just after it has been reaped.

The *Jawara* festival is entered into by the Kols with great enthusiasm, and it is during this period that the *bawa* or spirit possession is most common. During the nine days of the festival, singing, dancing and the beating of drums are kept up almost incessantly after nightfall.

It is called *Jawara* festival after the *juari* plant, a large millet, *Sorghum vulgare*. As this is not grown to a great extent in Central India, it is more usual to find that wheat rather than *jawar* is used in the ceremonies. On the first day of the nine days' celebration, a room or portion of a room is plastered and made ready for the sowings. A ceremonial bath should be taken first, and the one who plants the wheat should care for it the rest of the nine days. The wheat is then sown in small earthen vessels or sometimes in leaf dishes filled with earth, which is well-manured so that the wheat will grow nicely. It is watered daily and a few drops of milk are sprinkled over it in order to make it grow even better. The water should never be put on the plants directly from the hand, preferably the roots of a barley plant should be dipped into the water and thus it is sprinkled upon the growing plants. The vessels are kept indoors and probably not far from one of the household goddesses. It is said that all Kols do not sow this wheat, only those whose forefathers did so, or perhaps also those who have made some vow before a deity.

During the nine days of this celebration almost all the Kol deities are invoked and worshipped, and there is much singing before the village shrines, and *bawas* are common. The eighth night is the one most likely for a *bawa*, for that night all the people in the village are required to fast. During the nine days, the person caring for the wheat should fast in the evenings. The long stalks have sprung up by this time and are now ready to be taken out.

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796 787 The ninth day is the final day of the *Jawara* festival. The greenish-yellowish wheat can now be brought out and something foretold, in the case of the Fall festival, about the coming crop. If the wheat has grown nicely, in spite of the fact that it has been kept indoors, and in addition frequently covered by a basket, it is a sign that there will be a good crop of wheat. If the growth of the *jawara* is poor, the crop will likely be a poor one. The process appears to [789] have an element of magic in it and is used as a method to secure good crops; for the earth is first well manured and then well cared for and watered. Frazer in his series, "The Golden Bough", has found a similar ritual elsewhere which he calls "The Garden of Adonis."[1]

The growing wheat cannot be taken out before the late afternoon. When the time comes to take it out, some animals are sacrificed at the village shrine, there is singing and dancing and probably there will be a *bawa* with Shardamai as the deity possessing the devotee. The [480] procession is formed at the shrine, and the women carry the plants on their heads to the river or tank where the stalks are immersed. [789] The men folk follow a short distance behind and loudly beat their drums to frighten away any evil influences. The women sing songs [532] of the *bhagat* type and there may be some *bawas* as well, and the de- [785] votee has a trident stuck into his tongue or cheek. Upon reaching the place where the wheat will be "cooled", the women enter the water, and wash away the earth from the roots of the plants. The earthen- [43] ware vessels are thrown away, and the stalks are retained. Most of [62] them, though not all, are brought back and distributed to friends as a mark of goodwill. They receive from others as well as give. All enmities should be healed.

796 That evening there is a feast at the village shrine. The Kols 574 gather by *kurhis* and the animals sacrificed are eaten along with other foods; there is more music and songs and perhaps some more *bawas*. Sometimes the animals are not sacrificed until the procession bringing the stalks of wheat, returns from the tank.

796 *Khajleniya.* This is another term for the Jawara festival and refers especially to the activities of the ninth day, and the part the women play in carrying the wheat stalks. It is therefore spoken of [857] by some Kols as a woman's festival. Along with it there are certain [533] activities for the children. Two sticks are set up to represent a man [535] and a woman, and they dance about the sticks and sing some marriage songs. There is also a test of balance, and a long bamboo pole is [526] placed on the ground, and the boys and girls try to see if they can

1. Frazer, J. G., *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I., p. 236 ff.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

walk from one end to the other. In the evening the big meal is enjoyed by all alike.

Khichri or *Khichhrikai* is a simple festival, apparently one of fellowship when one should invite some friend to a meal and eat rice and *dal* which was boiled together. It comes several times a year.[1]

Marpak is a festival in memory of the dead. It has its Hindu influences and only the male members of the family go to a river where there is a Hindu *nai* and priest. The *nai* shaves their heads and beards and they go to the *ghat* to bathe. After this they visit the Brahmin who is sitting by the edge of the water. A few annas are given to him and holding up some water cupped in his hands, he mutters the name of the dead and recites some sacred texts. For the next few days whenever taking a bath or washing clothes, the Kol should do likewise and offer water in the name of his deceased. A leaf plate is put out either on the roof of the house or in a niche in the wall in front of the verandu. See plate xx. In this foods such as *puris, bhat, dal* and *bara* are put.

Nagpanchami. This is the worship of the serpent as symbolized particularly by the Cobra or *Nag*. This festival occurs on the fifth day of *Sawan* (July-August). Its institution is aptly described by Underhill :[2]

"This day celebrates the return of Krishna from the Yamuna after having overcome the big river snake Kaliya. Krishna had fallen into the river from a tree overhanging the bank, into which he had climbed to fetch a ball which had lodged there while he was playing with the herds people. His return with the snake was received with joy, the herdsmen offering Kaliya milk in gratitude for his not having harmed their favourite, Krishna.....

Another legend says that a man, ignorant of the festival, while ploughing on this day killed a nest of young snakes. The mother snake, in revenge, in the night bit the man and all his family, except one married daughter living in another village. Having killed all but this daughter, the mother snake set out for that village to kill her also. But the girl, knowing of the festival, had put out a dish of appetising food, which the snake tasted, and which gratified her so much that she not only refrained from killing the girl, but gave her a healing lotion to sprinkle on the bodies of the parents and other children, whereby they were all restored to life. After this, the festival became general."

1. Elwin also finds this festival among the Baigas and thinks they took it from the Gonds. He calls it a children's festival. The children beg rice and cook it by the riverside. *The Baigas*, p. 62.
2. Underhill, M. M., *The Hindu Religious Year*, p. 122.

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796 825 Kols everywhere observe this festival. On the fourth day of *Sawan* or *Srawan* they should observe a fast which ends with a feast on the fifth day. On the morning of the fifth day Kols worship some symbol of *Nag* and put out saucers of milk near termite hills and other places where snakes have been seen or suspected. No digging or ploughing is done this day lest the snakes be disturbed or injured. [574] Sometimes the women do no grinding or cutting. In the evening there is a big feast of "*puris, sewai, bara,* milk and sugar."

796 [776] *Naodurgan.* Literally, "Nine Durgas." This refers to the *Jawara* festival noted above, and is especially connected with the one observed in the fall. Kols say it is observed in remembrance of the nine *devis.* Durga *devi* is the eldest and eight more accompany her. Hindus usually speak of this as *Naoratri* or Nine Nights.

Phag. This is the same as the *Holi* festival, which we have described.

[574] *Pusan.* In Rewa it was said that this was held in the month of *Pus* (December-January). This may be a variation of the so called *Khichri* festival, for at this time Kols say they worship no particular *devi*, but have a feast with some friends.

796 789 [164] *Rakhi.* "Protector." The full title of this festival is *Rakhibandhana*, "amulet tying." This ceremony is performed in the month of *Sawan* (July-August). This is probably the most unhealthful season of the year in the villages, a time when malaria is very common, and something must be done to ward off illness. A coloured cord decorated with tinsel is tied to the wrist; husbands should tie one on the wrists of the wife and the wife on the husband, sisters on the wrists of brothers and *vice versa.*

[177 773] This festival is based upon the Hindu legend from the *Bhavishyottara Purana* in which the story is told of the earth, men and gods being under the power and tyranny of the great King Bali, who, by his devotion to Siva, had gained enough merit and power to rule. Before Vishnu became incarnated as the Dwarf Vamana and subsequently conquered him, it was necessary to have some kind of protection from this demon. Vishnu gave Indrani, the wife of Indra, a coloured silken thread which was tied by her about Indra's wrists, and thus he secured protection from Bali.

796 177 *Ramnavami* is the birthday of Rama and comes on the ninth day of the month of *Chaita* (March-April). This coincides with the ninth day of the spring *Jawara* festival, and is the Hinduised term a Kol may use to describe the doings that night. See under *Jawara.*

796 789 184 *Sirwani.* This is another name for the *Rakhi* festival. *Sirwani*

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comes from the word *Srawani*—severing of cords—and occurs in the month of *Srawan* or *Sawan* (July-August). This is really the Brahmanical name for *Rakhi* and refers to the removal of the old sacred thread and the gift of a new one. The festival was named only by the Kols at Kotmi, on the Southern border of Rewa.

Tija. This is often given by Kols and is the more common term for the *Khajleniya* festival noted above. It refers to the women's work on the ninth day and is thus essentially a woman's festival. In some places the words are put together: *Tija-Khajleniya*.

It should be observed that but few of the features in the more popular festivals observed by Kols may be traced directly to Hindu influence of a higher kind. Even where there are parallels, the worship is of a different nature, simpler and much more animistic.

AGRICULTURAL RITES. It will have been noted that some of the Kol festivals, *Jawara*, for example, are connected with agricultural magic. A few illustrations are given concerning the activities of the agricultural Kols at the time of planting, reaping and threshing.

Sowing. The sowing of crops is closely associated with the fall *Jawara* festival which precedes the sowing of the winter wheat, harvested in March and April. The second phase of *Jawara* comes in the spring at the close of the harvest. It was noted that the *Jawara* sowings at *Kunwar* give a forecast of the coming crops. The greater the number of plants the better the price, and the rootlets help one to judge the size of the crop.

At the actual time of ploughing the Kols have few, if any, ceremonies. A *hom* offering to *Dhartimai*—the goddess of earth, or Mother Earth—is made just before the ploughing begins.

During the growing season an earthenware pot, coloured white and dotted with black marks, is set upside down on a pole in the centre of the field. This is chiefly to avert the evil eye and to protect the crops, though some call it *Khetrapal* or *Bhumiya*. Its presence insures fertility.

Reaping. When the time to reap has come, the one who controls the harvest will take some curds with him to the field. From some heads of the still unreaped wheat or rice, a few grains are taken and mixed with the curds. The man then goes about the field scattering a bit of the curds and wheat here and there. This is said to be an act of propitiation as *Bura deo* is probably living in the field in some form or other, possibly as a snake, and some accident may result if he is not propitiated in this manner; it may be a serpent bite, or a cut from the sickle. This propitiation likewise helps to bring a good

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one's bodyguard. On the whole the dogs of an Indian village are a miserable lot and are a menace to the health of the people.

The tiger is another animal reverenced by Indian peasants and is very prominent in their folk belief, especially in areas where tigers roam. This is also shared by the Kols and as a jungle people they reverence him. A Kol should never take part in a beat to track down a tiger. If one should be met in the forest he should be addressed very respectfully. Certain parts of the tiger are useful as powerful charms. The whiskers, teeth and claws are prophylactics against the evil eye. To eat his flesh, particularly his heart, gives one the disposition of a tiger. To see a dead tiger is bad luck as his spirit may later harm the person observing him. If worshipped as Baghdeo[1] the tiger will not injure any one he meets in the forest nor molest the cattle. There is a story current among the Kols that in the distant past a tiger was born out of a Kol. During the years that followed they lived together peacefully in the forest, but after a time the tiger began to trouble Kols so that a separation was deemed advisable and since that time they have lived apart.[2]

The serpent is both feared and reverenced by Kols. It is usually the cobra which is adored, although Kols treat all serpents with respect. However, it is considered no great sin to slay a cobra, but it must not be done unless the cobra is stubborn and shows fight, particularly when in the house. If a cobra, or any other snake is found in a dwelling house it is addressed respectfully as *maharaj* and asked politely to leave. It may be helped out with a little judicious poking with a stick. If it goes out readily it is helped on its way and if all goes well is not molested further. If, however, the *nag* shows fight and does not appear willing to leave the house or courtyard it may be beaten and killed and its body burned. An offering should be made to its spirit after such an occasion. At the time of the festival of Nagpanchami[3] milk is set out for snakes, a common practice all over Central India.

The horse is an animal with which Rautiya Kols do not have much to do; as a rule they will not touch one, and its dung is absolutely taboo. Some of their traditions concerning horses are recorded on previous pages.[4]

The sacrificial animals are the chicken, goat, pig and sheep.

We could not find out much concerning the Kol idea of birds.

1 See pages 141-142.
2 See pages 41-42.
3 See pages 171-172.
4 See pages 34-35; also Chapter X.

1:Griffiths, M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

spirits or goddesses. It has been noted that the mango branch plays an important part in wedding functions. It was also noted that in building the wedding booth Kols ought to use, if possible, wood from the *saleh* tree (*Boswellia serrata*) both for the main supports of the *marhua* and for the sacred pole, the *magrohan*. The consensus of opinion is that for the latter the *saleh* is absolutely indispensable. 824 [776] [585]

The *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is found beside Kol shrines and in the courtyards of their houses. It should be watered daily and its leaves are said to have certain medicinal qualities, being especially effective in fevers. Tulasi was once a woman who engaged in religious austerities for a long time and at last dared to ask to become a wife of Vishnu. For this presumption Tulasi was cursed by Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu, and was turned into this plant. Vishnu comforted her by promising to be near her in the form of a *salagrama* stone. So they are often associated in worship and even in Kol shrines a *salagrama* stone is usually found close to the *tulasi* plant. The leaf is highly scented and a bit is often broken off by Kols and eaten with their food. During the evening hours it is worshipped by having a small *dip* lighted before it. [757] [773] [778] [263] [782]

Dead trees are generally feared as the death of a tree is most certainly due to an evil spirit's influence and a *churel* often kills a tree to make a residence for herself. [775]

MARRIAGE OF TREES. The Kols have a ceremony for the marriage of trees. The mango tree is the one usually married and this should be done at the time it first begins to bear fruit. Unless such a tree has been married no adult should eat of the fruit, although a child may do so. There are at least two methods of marrying trees, both of which require the Brahmin priest. In the first instance a mango tree should be married to a tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indicus*). This tree may be near at hand, or even some distance from the mango tree. The ceremony appears to consist in having a married couple wind a cotton thread coloured with *haldi* seven times around the tree. They should move about the tree in a clockwise direction and as they do this the Brahmin recites sacred texts. First the mango tree is wound then the tamarind; if they are close enough together the thread may be stretched from one to the other. It is not unusual to find a mango and a tamarind tree planted close by. Many of the features of the regular wedding are incorporated, and following the function there is a feast. 824 796 [574]

In the second instance a small wooden peg, variously coloured, takes the place of the tamarind tree. This may be made out of tama-

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824 796 rind wood, although this does not seem to be essential. Stakes for this purpose may be purchased ready for use in the bazaars when the mango crop is about to ripen.

The peg is driven into the ground near the tree or trees which are to be married. One peg will do for a number of trees and it reduces the expense in connection with the ceremony. The Brahmin priest will stretch a thin yellow thread from the peg to each of the trees. The owner of the trees has some supplies on hand, said to include *til* oil, rice, *lawa* and *ghi*. Each person present is given a bit of these things which are put into a fire by the sacred pole at the signal of the priest, who says "swaha, swaha," as they are being cast in. The fire blazes up and gives off a scented smoke. The *pandit* (or even the *nai*), then ties, first of all, a bit of yellow cord around the wrist of the owner, and then on the wrist of each one present. The owner [431] should give to everyone present a gift of uncooked rice, the amount varying according to his ability. This ceremony should be performed just before or after the time the tree bears its first fruits. A tree is married only once.

312 796 TANKS AND WELLS. There is a somewhat similar ceremony in the case of wells and tanks. In village India large earthen tanks are commonly used to store water. Water not so wedded will not be as potable as it ought to be. In the case of a tank there should be a pole set up in the centre of the pond. This is said to represent the male element, the husband of the spirit inhabiting the tank and guarding it. It may also correspond to the *magrohan*. An unmarried tank may be molested by evil spirits and the pole warns such away. No coherent account of a ritual in this connection could be obtained from the Kols.

Wells are "married" by putting a bit of *sendur* on the coping and the well is circumambulated seven times by a married couple. Another account was that a Brahmin is called who worships, says *mantras* and performs the *hom* sacrifice. Following this he drinks a *lota* of water and others follow suit. This is sufficient to consecrate a well and make its waters sweet and wholesome.

762 775 MISCELLANEOUS BELIEFS. A number of other animistic beliefs may be mentioned here:

The man who commits suicide does a very foolish thing and it seldom occurs among Kols, for, they say, the police make a great fuss about a suicide, and there is much trouble as a result, and the whole community is hurt. But if committed, hanging from trees is the usual method resorted to. The soul of such a person cannot go to *baikuntha* (Vishnu's heaven), and is doomed to wander about homeless

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1. *Dadar* or *Dadra*. This is by far the most common kind sung by Kols and is a well-known melody sung all over northern India. H. A. Popley in his book *The Music of India* says: "The *Ghazal* and the *Dadra* are two Hindustani melodies. They consist as a rule of *Antara* only, sung alike to a simple melody in syncopated time, which is known as Pashto." Kols may sing this form on many occasions and at any time of the day and night, and its use is not limited as certain others are. It is used at the *Chhatthi* rejoicings when the women sing and dance on the sixth day after the birth of a child; it is used throughout the wedding cycle; and may even be used at times of religious worship. Sometimes the words are chaste and beautiful, and again a *dadra* song may contain abuse as is common at the times of weddings.[3] [533] [846] [585] [796]

2. *Bhagat*. This is predominantly the song of worship. Some Kols say it is used for the *devis* and *devtas* while *bhajans* are used for Bhagawan. This does not appear to be the actual practice however. The root of the word is from *bhakti* which means "passionate devotion," and a *bhagat* is generally sung before the gods and goddesses. It is sung when the *jawara* is sown. At times when men become controlled by the *devi* it is this type of song that helps to bring on the emotional excitement resulting in "possession". The words may apply to any occasion and the rhythm varies from the *dadra* and the *rai*.

3. *Bhajans* are religious songs, but are supposed to be addressed to the higher powers, and Bhagawan is generally mentioned. However we found an instance of a *bhajan* being addressed to Sharda.

4. *Rai*. This type implies songs of Krishna and Radha. There are various rhythms in use, but its content, as far as words are concerned, is frequently obscene. Like the two following types it is sung mostly at the *holi* season. [831]

5. *Phag*. This is named from the month of Phagun for it is supposed to be sung only during that particular month, and may be called a spring song. Phagun is the eleventh month in the Hindu year and covers the last half of February and the first half of March. This corresponds with part of the *holi* season, and some say the *phag* type of song should be sung only during the last fifteen days of the season. The contents of the majority of *phag* songs are not respectable and it is very difficult to get one sung for an outsider; they are some- [805]

1 *Op. Cit.*, p. 90.
2 Elwin calls the *Duduria* the true forest songs of the Baigas. *The Baigas*, p. 438.

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PLATE XX.

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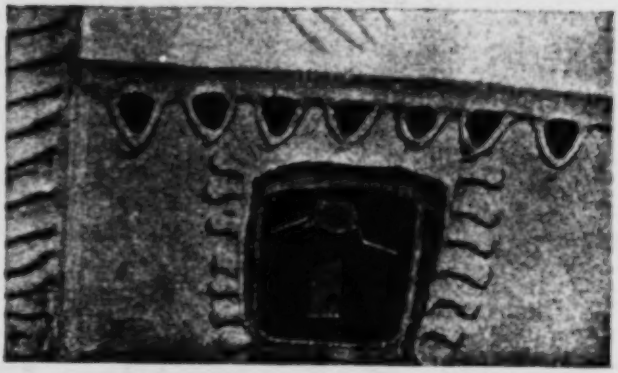

Leaf Cup set in decorated niche in outer Wall.

342
532

Peacock Design beside the Threshold of a Kol Dwelling.

[Facing p. 244]